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ABSTRACT

Project Learning through Industry and Volunteer Educators (Project LIVE) is a mentoring, tutorial, and world of work program that matches a junior high school student with a corporate volunteer. Since 1972, it has matched inner-city New York City seventh and eighth graders who are below grade-level in reading with volunteers who tutor in their workplaces. More than 4,000 students have benefitted from this program, which evaluations have shown to be very successful. Overall, 91 percent of participating students graduate from high school, and the dropout rate of 9 percent is much lower than the 35 percent who dropout city-wide. The goal for Project LIVE in the coming year is to expand the program by three companies. Each corporation has 20 to 25 volunteers, each of whom is released for the last hour of the work day to tutor at the work site. Students are brought from school and given a snack to wait until their mentors are ready. The first hour is spent in introduction to the world of work, and the second hour, after the tutor's regular work day, is devoted to tutoring in basic skills. Mentor training and support services are available. A list of companies that have participated is provided. (SLD)

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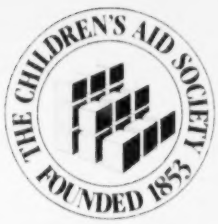

140th ANNIVERSARY

Project LIVE

Learning through Industry and Volunteer Educators

A Program of The Children's Aid Society

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

"I hope the program never stops. As a Black, 24 year old youth I have already beat the odds. I am supposed to be dead, on drugs, or a high school dropout. Thanks to Project LIVE, I didn't become a negative statistic." (a former Project LIVE student)

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I. BACKGROUND

Project LIVE (Learning through Industry and Volunteer Educators) is a mentoring, tutorial and world of work program that matches a junior high school student with a corporate volunteer. Since it began in 1972, its goal has been to reach inner city children in the seventh and eighth grades who have fallen behind in reading and provide them with an opportunity to acquire needed skills through one-to-one mentoring and tutoring. These students are at risk to become school dropouts, and it is Project LIVE's goal to keep them in school as motivated, learning, achieving students.

Through this program, a child is exposed to the work environment. Students observe their mentors and co-workers in the various tasks associated with their work. They become active participants, learning both manual and problem solving skills. Through this shared work experience, students learn real work skills and see the connection between school and work. Mentors have the opportunity to use their creativity and expertise, and students and mentors alike benefit from this one-to-one experience.

More than 4,000 children have benefited from this program. We know from evaluation studies of Project LIVE that the students who are in the program have increased motivation to learn as a result of their exposure to the world of work. As reading skills improve, confidence is strengthened. The goal for the majority of our students is to finish high school and go on to college and/or vocational/technical schools or to enter the world of work.

We have seen the pattern of failure stopped for the majority of our students. Results have shown that the children in this program make significant improvement in reading skills and a noticeable change in attitude and motivation in school. Ninety-one percent of participating PL students graduate from high school (as compared with the New York City average of sixty-five percent.)

With a staff of only two professionals and one program assistant, and with a budget that is very small, The Children's Aid Society has been running this successful program for twenty-two years.

Our goal for this year is to expand the program by three companies. With your help, we will accomplish that goal.

'Get more companies involved. They don't have to be Fortune 100 companies. I'm sure that many smaller companies would get involved if approached.' (a Project LIVE Tutor)

II. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROJECT LIVE EVALUATION STUDY, 1986

- Youngsters who participate in Project LIVE have a much lower high school dropout rate than their peers, 9.0% versus 35%, respectively.

- An overwhelming majority of youngsters find the services useful in increasing basic skills (i.e., reading, writing). The motivational push favorably impacts the educational achievement of the students.

- Students truly enjoy this program, finding it both educational and rewarding. Exposure to the world of work and having a concerned adult to share experiences with motivates the students to attend each week. They, in turn, recommend the program to other students, and it is not unusual for our teachers to have waiting lists.

- Approximately two out of every five Project LIVE graduates go to college or a technical/vocational school.

- Over one-half (52%) of Project LIVE graduates secure employment after completing high school.

- The volunteer mentors are satisfied with the way in which the program operates. They find the program's staff and affiliated teachers very cooperative and supportive. Volunteers state that participation in Project LIVE makes them feel good about themselves and their company.

III. HIGHLIGHTS OF PROJECT LIVE EVALUATION STUDY, 1992

- Project LIVE continued to have the same positive impact on at risk youths by helping them to remain in school until graduation.

- The students were able to see the connection between getting an education and employment, and could visualize themselves working in a corporate environment.

- Almost all of the former students had completed high school, and many went on to college. Some expressed a desire to attend college but did not feel they had the financial resources required.

- From an economic perspective, Project LIVE proved to be cost-beneficial to businesses and the taxpayers alike, by averting likely governmental expenditures on school dropouts who get in trouble with the law. **For every $1 spent on the program, a $12.50 saving was generated.** The program was seen as a relatively inexpensive approach for prevention of school dropouts.

IV. THE CORPORATE ROLE

The Corporate Site - At each site, there are 20 to 25 volunteers and an equal amount of students from the junior high school to which the corporation has been matched. Mentors spend two hours with their students one afternoon a week during the school year. The students are escorted to the company immediately after school and are given a snack in the cafeteria where they wait until 4 o'clock for their mentors. (Mentors are encouraged to use their work areas or offices if possible for tutoring.)

The first hour is spent in the world of work or life skills experience, during which time, the student is introduced to his mentors job, visits other departments, learns about office machines, procedures, and job skills. The second hour is devoted to tutoring in basic skills. Tutors use the reference materials provided by The Children's Aid Society; they include educational and life skills materials, as well as books for pleasure reading, educational games and software.

Released Time - The corporation releases its employees for one hour a week, the last hour of the working day on which Project LIVE meets.

The Corporate Coordinator - He/she works with the CAS Educational Advisor to plan and direct all of the activities at the corporate site which includes recruiting volunteers, scheduling training sessions, and arranging for snacks for students.

The Volunteer - The mentor is an employee who agrees to volunteer two hours a week to tutor a student. He/she does not require any prior experience, only the desire and willingness to give of his/her time and abilities to help a youngster. *(Mentors will be required to attend three two-hour training sessions provided by the Educational Advisor.)*

Space Allocation - All tutoring takes place at the corporate site. Space is needed in the cafeteria or other meeting place for students and mentors. Space should also be provided for a Resource Library which houses the books and other educational materials of Project LIVE.

Special Events - The corporation should plan a special holiday party for students and mentors before Christmas vacation and at the last session of the school year and a Career Panel to be held sometime during the year. The Corporate Coordinator may plan company tours,field trips or other special events/programs, and should plan some form of recognition for the eighth graders who have completed their two years .

Snacks - The corporation is responsible for providing nutritious after school snacks for the students, (i.e. sandwiches, fruits, beverages.)

V. THE SCHOOL'S ROLE

The Junior High School - The school can be one selected by the company or by Project LIVE staff, who presents the program to the district superintendent, the principal, and appropriate faculty.

The Liaison Teacher - A faculty member of the participating school, who accompanies the students to and from the site, participates in training sessions, selects students, provides information about students to mentors, and acts as an educational resource for mentors.

The Student - The student is a seventh or eighth grader one to three years below grade level in reading, and is recommended by his teachers because he/she has the potential to benefit from a one-to-one mentoring experience. The student is not a special education student, nor one who has behavioral or emotional problems.

Transportation - Students and their Liaison Teacher are bussed to the company after school at the company's expense. CAS will arrange the transportation and scheduling throughout the school year.

VI. PROJECT LIVE'S ROLE

CAS Support Services - All services offered by The Children's Aid Society are available to Project LIVE students, including camps, medical and dental services, counseling, educational and recreational programs.

CAS Project LIVE Director - The Program Director is the administrator of the program and an Educational Advisor.

CAS Educational Advisor - The Educational Advisor is an expert in junior high school education and remediation and is trained to develop tutoring skills in volunteers. He/she conducts the training of volunteers and provides educational monitoring during monthly visits to the program.

Educational Support - A training manual written by Project LIVE staff is used in the training and given to each mentor. Other tutoring and educational materials are provided for mentors throughout the year:

- *A mentor newsletter written by Project LIVE staff is provided periodically during the year.*

- *Additional workshops and/or rap sessions for mentors are conducted by Educational Advisors during the year.*

- *A yearbook, "Live and Let's Learn", is written and illustrated by the students and edited by the Project LIVE staff.*

VII. CORPORATE BENEFITS

- Project LIVE presents employees with a rewarding, worthwhile volunteer experience on company premises.
- Project LIVE provides visible evidence of a corporation's interest in and support of public education.
- Project LIVE helps prepare students to be future employees.

VIII. EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

- Project LIVE enhances feelings of pride in the company for its community concern and involvement.
- Project LIVE gives opportunity to be a role model for young people.
- Project LIVE offers a satisfying personal experience related to and yet separate from their work.
- Project LIVE provides an outlet for abilities and talents not used in everyday work.

"I really enjoyed experiencing a business type of learning. I feel it helps young people prepare for the future in business." (a former Project LIVE student)

The following companies have Project LIVE Programs in '93-'94:

The Chase Manhattan Bank, N.A.

Chemical Bank

Davis Polk & Wardwell

HBO, Inc.

IBJ Schroder Bank & Trust Company

J.P. Morgan and Company, Inc.

The following corporations have previously sponsored Project LIVE Programs:

American Cyanamid Company

AT & T

Avon Products, Inc.

CBS Magazine

Exxon Corporation

Gulf & Western Industries

Lederle Consumer Health Division of American Cyanamid Company

Manufacturers Hanover Trust

New York State Division for Youth

New York State Governor's Office of Employee Relations

New York Telephone Company

Reader's Digest

Telesector Resources Group (formerly NYNEX)

Time Inc.